

Gordon Brown Favors Soft Power and Close U.S. Ties

Reginald Dale and Justin Wiseman

Britain's new prime minister, Gordon Brown, has begun to drop helpful hints for those engaged in one of the biggest guessing games in British and international politics—predicting the direction and contents of his foreign policy. These first clues suggest that Brown will be more inclined than his predecessor, Tony Blair, to use soft power in tackling international problems, without, however, ruling out military force; that he will seek to develop a new concept of “Britishness” to help define and guide the United Kingdom’s world role; and that he will maintain strong links with the United States.

Brown has not spelled out his foreign policy since taking over from Blair on June 27, but he has provided indications in speeches and comments and in the makeup of his new cabinet. Many analysts have, perhaps too hastily, concluded that by appointing ministers who have been critical of U.S. policy in the Middle East and Iraq, including David Milliband, the new foreign secretary, Brown is signaling a cooler attitude toward Washington and changes in Iraq policy.

Milliband, however, has rapidly restated his support for the decision to invade Iraq and has been quick to dismiss suggestions that Britain will now stage a quick exit. True, the cabinet includes John Denham, who resigned a junior ministerial position in protest over Iraq in 2003, but he will be handling education, not foreign policy. That leaves Mark Malloch Brown, a notorious critic of the Bush administration, who has become a junior Foreign Office minister. But he will ultimately have to follow the line from the top, and Brown has reiterated his long-standing view that a British prime minister should always be close to the U.S. president.

Two general, related conclusions can be drawn from these early indications: in foreign, as in domestic, policy, Brown wants to draw a line under Blair’s 10 years in office and offer a fresh approach to long-standing problems; and the fresh approach will usually involve changes of style and emphasis rather than dramatic policy reversals, at least in the immediate future.

Brown is inhibited both by his prudent nature and by his political history from making early big changes. As the second most important government member since Blair took power in 1997, he shares at least indirect responsibility for controversial policies such as the invasion of Iraq and Blair’s close links with President George Bush.

As chancellor of the exchequer, Brown was well known for his caution, tending sometimes to indecisiveness. He is more calculating and less impulsive than the more emotional Blair. He also has virtually no foreign policy experience, other than on international economic issues such as development and debt relief, and, during his long stint as heir apparent to Blair, he deliberately refrained from offering hostages to fortune by keeping quiet on major foreign matters.



Gordon Brown

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EU Reform Treaty Will Disappoint Europe’s Federalists

Agreement on a framework “reform treaty” at a Brussels summit in June has generated a stiff-enough breeze to lift the European Union out of the doldrums in which it has drifted since French and Dutch voters rejected a proposed EU constitution in May and June 2005. The general view, in the words of outgoing British prime minister Tony Blair, is that the deal gives Europe the chance to put its internal distractions behind and focus on larger problems, such as the economy, energy, immigration, terrorism, defense, and the environment, that really concern European citizens.

But while most of the 27 leaders got roughly what they wanted, few felt that the agreement was grounds for general rejoicing. European integrationists are only too aware that the new outline treaty, which replaced the doomed constitution, does not take the EU much further toward the ever-closer union they seek, even if the new document contains about 90 percent of the constitution’s substance. A fierce defense of national interests by Poland, the UK, and, to a lesser extent, France and the Netherlands, demonstrated the continuing clout of member states, rather than the union’s collective institutional machinery. For the foreseeable future, the hopes of those still laboring for a United States of Europe have been dashed.

Nevertheless, German chancellor Angela Merkel, who presided over the summit, had reason to be satisfied. Well before the start of the six-month German EU presidency that ended on June 30, she had taken on the seemingly impossible task of rescuing the bulk of the

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GORDON BROWN (from page 1)

There are two further reasons why Brown will not suddenly pull British troops from Iraq, as some have predicted. First, he is an Atlanticist who would not want to deliver such a rapid and stinging rebuff to Washington; second, such a huge change of course would look like weakness, especially after the attempted terrorist attacks in London and Glasgow that greeted his arrival in 10 Downing Street.

On the other hand, Brown will want to distinguish his policies from those of Blair in the eyes of British voters. And he has started doing so by stressing the need to learn the lessons from Iraq, where he has admitted that mistakes were made—a not-so-subtle reference to errors made by Blair. He has also said that more emphasis should be put on political reconciliation and economic instruments in Iraq—more, he means, than Blair did. He has yet, however, to explain such changes in any detail.

Here is how his policies appear to be shaping up in a number of priority areas:

Soft power: Brown believes fervently in the power of economic levers, such as job creation, growth promotion, and reconstruction, to achieve foreign policy aims. He would apply such methods in Iraq, Palestine, and, on a broader canvas, in Africa, which he has long seen as a top priority. But he also believes in maintaining strong military options and has supported the replacement of Britain's Trident nuclear deterrent with a new U.S. system, despite strong opposition from the Labour Party's left wing.

War on terror: Brown plans to play a strong, leading role in fighting international terrorism, while constantly emphasizing the need to win the "hearts and minds" of those who might be tempted by extremism. He wants to tighten antiterrorist legislation and reinforce other measures inside the UK.

Iraq and Afghanistan: Brown has said that Britain will not abandon its commitments to either country, but he looks likely to put more long-term emphasis on Britain's military commitment to Afghanistan, where some senior British officers would prefer to concentrate the country's forces.

Climate change: Brown will try to ensure that climate change stays at the top of the international agenda and a major priority of British diplomacy. So will Milliband, who was previously secretary of the environment.

Britishness: Brown wants a clearer definition of British qualities and values, both as a beacon for immigrants and to clarify Britain's role as a major player in a globalized world. In Milliband's words, Britain can be a "global hub," economically, culturally, and politically, through "a unique set of alliances" with the United States, the European Union, and India.

Europe: Brown will be pragmatic toward the EU and will need more convincing than Blair of the benefits of further integration. He will continue to keep Britain out of the euro. He will strongly resist demands from the Conservative opposition and its allies for a referendum on the EU Reform Treaty approved by Blair at his last EU summit in June, on the grounds that Blair successfully protected British interests. If he fails, he will risk a severe setback. He would have to campaign for a "yes," but the outcome would probably be "no"—a huge triumph for his opponents. ■

EU TREATY (from page 1)

constitution's contents by altering its "presentation"—dropping the ill-starred name "constitution" and removing such trappings of European statehood as a flag, an anthem, and a vapid motto ("United in Diversity"). Britain successfully argued against giving the proposed new foreign affairs representative the title of foreign minister.

Nevertheless, the treaty, which now goes for detailed negotiation to an Intergovernmental Conference, should make the EU's voice better heard in the outside world. The leaders have maintained key components of the constitution, including a full-time president of the European Council who could serve up to five years, and more power for the high representative for foreign affairs. The European Commission will be slimmed to make it more effective, and new voting procedures will be introduced within the Council of Ministers, linking national voting weights more closely to population and replacing the complex, unsatisfactory mechanism now in force. Weighted majority voting, instead of unanimity, will extend to 50 new areas, including judicial and police cooperation, education, and economic policy.

It was here that Poland dug in its heels, arguing that the new weighting would unfairly reduce Polish influence in majority voting and give too much to Germany. The Poles were granted a major medium-term concession, under which the new system will not come fully into force until 2017. But Polish officials now warn that they could still reopen the issue in the detailed negotiations that are meant to be completed by October, with a view to completing treaty ratification by mid-2009.

Britain was another beneficiary of exceptional treatment, acquiring guarantees that its labor and social security laws would not be affected by the EU Charter of Human Rights and that it would not be outvoted on justice and home affairs. Britain also received new guarantees that foreign and defense policies would remain under national control. France staged a symbolic, though perhaps not substantive, political coup by eliminating the aim of "free and undistorted competition" from the treaty's preamble, to reassure French voters that the EU does not stand for cutthroat U.S.-style competition. The Dutch secured increased powers for national parliaments over European Commission proposals.

Many of these concessions were achieved by the diplomatic equivalent of blackmail. The other countries knew that France and the Netherlands would have to win enough concessions to argue that they did not need referendums on the new treaty. Britain also needed sufficient assurances on national sovereignty to avoid a referendum that the new government of Gordon Brown would almost certainly lose. Even now, ratification by all 27 countries may not prove easy. At least one country, Ireland, will definitely hold a referendum.

While the treaty is likely to disappoint the 18 countries that had already ratified, or nearly ratified, the more ambitious constitution, the theme of the objections that emerged in Brussels is clear: the pull of national sovereignty is far from dead, and many Europeans are still not prepared to hand the keys of state power to an EU that often fails to deliver on the issues that are the most important to its citizens. RD ■

RECENT EVENTS

- **May 14**—The U.S.-EU Partnership Committee for Ukraine held a meeting in Berlin that was jointly hosted by CSIS and the German Council on Foreign Relations. Committee members present were Zbigniew Brzezinski, CSIS counselor and trustee; Volker Rühle, former German minister of defense; Bronislaw Geremek, former Polish foreign minister; and Jan Petersen, former Norwegian foreign minister. Press statement at www.csis.org/europe.
- **May 30**—Three CSIS scholars, Julianne Smith and Simon Serfaty of the Europe Program and Grant Aldonas, CSIS Scholl Chair in International Business, gave an advance briefing for the media on the G-8 Summit held in Heiligendamm, Germany, from June 6 to 8.
- **June 10-12**—A seminar in Brussels entitled “Terms of Engagement: The Euro-Atlantic Partnership at Sixty,” was attended by senior think-tank representatives from more than two dozen institutions and by officials from the EU and NATO. Cosponsored with the Transatlantic Policy Network, it was the concluding meeting of a two-year project on the EU, the United States, and NATO organized by the CSIS Brzezinski Chair with the CSIS Europe Program, which received support from the European Commission.
- **June 13**—A panel of European correspondents discussed how they cover Washington with 90 award-winning U.S. journalism students at Georgetown University, under the auspices of the CSIS Transatlantic Media Network.
- **June 20**—Radoslaw Sikorski, Polish senator and former Polish minister of defense, and Rudy deLeon, former U.S. deputy secretary of defense, discussed U.S.-Polish relations, missile defense, Russia, Afghanistan and energy security at a CSIS Europe Program Marshall Dialogue meeting in Washington made possible by the support of the German Marshall Fund. Audio at www.csis.org.
- **June 21**—The CSIS New European Democracies Project (NEDP) and the Defense Industrial Initiatives Group held a conference, “The Role of the Black Sea Region in the Transatlantic Security Agenda,” the second in their Central and East Europe Security Agenda series. Audio at www.csis.org/events.

United States and Russia Head for a Long Cold Peace

Janusz Bugajski

The camaraderie on display between the U.S. and Russian presidents at their informal summit meeting in Kennebunkport in early July has done little to disguise the deep chill that has begun to characterize relations between Washington and Moscow. The United States and Russia are entering an unpredictable and potentially destabilizing new era that can best be described as one of Cold Peace.

Competition between Russia and the United States for global influence no longer revolves around ideological conflict or proxy wars, as in the Cold War. Instead, under President Vladimir Putin, an authoritarian and assertive Russia is challenging the principles of democratic expansion pursued by the United States and the European Union. Although there are areas of cooperation, such as counterterrorism, the Kremlin is seeking to disrupt the Western agenda through operational stealth, unconventional weaponry, and creating confusion about its strategic objectives.

Strategic Confusion: Russia can more easily conceal its adversarial position now that there is no Iron Curtain separating East and West. Moscow does not pose as an ideological foe but as an equivalent to the West. Its drive to establish spheres of dominance in nearby regions is depicted as a defense of national interests. Kremlin intentions to split the Atlantic alliance and reduce U.S. influence are portrayed as a pragmatic policy of “multipolarity.”

In his speech at the Munich security conference in February, Putin called for downgrading international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that obstruct Moscow's expansionist agenda. Beneath the friendly façade of the Kennebunkport summit, Putin indicated that Russia wants to be treated as an indispensable global power and is capable of harming U.S. security whether by supporting Iran's nuclear weapons program or opposing the planned U.S. missile shield in Central Europe.

Some Western governments, especially in Berlin, Paris, and Rome, continue to view Russia as a faltering democracy rather than a resurgent autocracy. They believe that a lasting alliance can be forged with the current political elite in Moscow and are willing to overlook negative trends in Russia's foreign policy to avoid disruptive conflicts. This has been evident in their low-key response to Moscow's monopolistic energy policy and its persistent threats against several new EU members. Such an approach is ultimately counterproductive, because Western weakness and disunity embolden the Kremlin.

Operational Stealth: The new Russia is stealthier than the Soviet Union. Without declaring any global mission, the Kremlin is collaborating with repressive and anti-American regimes, seeking control over nearby economies, and countering unwelcome security policies pursued by Washington along its borders. Moscow's strategy toward Europe focuses on disrupting EU consensus over issues as diverse as missile defense and Kosovo's final status, and preventing NATO enlargement to Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.

Unconventional Weaponry: The Kremlin is deploying new tools to achieve its ends. Tallinn, for instance, recently accused Moscow of orchestrating cyber sabotage attacks on Estonian government Web sites. Russia's trump card, however, is its growing monopolization of energy supplies to Europe as it strives to become an energy superpower. European energy dependence and Russian purchases of energy infrastructure and other assets in targeted states reinforce Moscow's political influence and strategic objectives.

U.S. policy has also provided a bonanza for the Kremlin. Putin has depicted the proposed missile shield in Europe, designed to defend against an Iranian nuclear threat, as the onset of a new arms race. By threatening to target European capitals such as Warsaw and Prague, which may host the U.S. system, the Kremlin aims to fracture the Atlantic alliance.

The surge in anti-Americanism provoked by the Iraqi war also suits Moscow's interests. By describing the United States as an imperialist aggressor, the Kremlin gains a freer hand to implement its agenda under the cover of pragmatism, commercialism, and national interests.

With Russian presidential elections due in March 2008, one can expect foreign policy to remain assertive. And if Russia were to undergo social convulsions because of growing economic disparities and ethnic conflicts, Moscow might adopt an even more confrontational approach to distract attention from internal turmoil. In this turbulent new era, the United States and Russia have embarked on a long Cold Peace.

Janusz Bugajski is director of the CSIS New European Democracies Project. ■

NEW LEADERS, AND AMBITIOUS PLANS, FOR EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

Julianne Smith

Alexander Weis, who takes over as head of the European Defence Agency (EDA) on October 1, will find two ambitious agency initiatives at the top of his agenda: a bid to introduce unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) into Europe's crowded commercial airspace, and a multinational plan to improve combat protection for European soldiers.

Weis, currently deputy national armaments director in the German Defense Ministry, will succeed Nick Witney, head of the EDA since its creation in 2004, who is to step down under arrangements requiring half the agency's top positions to change hands every three years. Hilmar Linnenkamp, Witney's deputy, will follow suit and be replaced by Carlos Magrassi as deputy for strategy and Adam Sowa as deputy for operations.

Weis will arrive shortly after the EDA is due to award contracts to companies or research institutes for studying the political, technological, and industrial barriers that prevent UAVs from using commercial airspace as well as the safety and air traffic-control considerations. The study is a step forward a comprehensive "road map" to enable civilian and government-operated UAVs to fly through commercial airspace, alongside manned aircraft, by 2012. Current rules allow only military UAVs to fly in segregated airspace.

The potentially controversial plan has become more urgent now that European UAV producers are rapidly identifying nonmilitary uses for the vehicles. These include traffic control, mapping and surveillance, package tracking, and the positioning of cellular telephone nodes that would eliminate the need for towers on the ground.

The EDA says that the use of commercial airspace is the key to expanding the role of UAVs beyond the purely military into the security and ultimately commercial domains and to creating the scale of demand around which European industry can unite. Europe has the potential to move quickly into industrial leadership in this "breakthrough technology," it adds.

Before giving such projects the go-ahead, however, EU governments want to examine crucial questions such as how collisions can be avoided in Europe's congested airspace and whether the new techniques could interfere with existing communications platforms.

Weis's second priority will be a joint €55 million investment project aimed at improving protection for European forces, particularly in urban combat. In May 2007, 20 European defense ministries issued a first call for €15 million worth of proposals covering protection from snipers; protection from indirect fire from exploding ammunition; detection of chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks; and development of new materials for passive protection.

The hope is that this multinational approach will set a precedent for future collaboration in defense research and technology. This is the first time that so many countries have banded together to fund defense research.

Julianne Smith is director of the CSIS Europe Program. ■

NEWS UPDATES

- Russian president Vladimir Putin offered to expand his proposal for a shared missile defense system with the United States during an informal summit meeting with President George Bush in Kennebunkport, Maine, a step Putin said would take U.S.-Russian relations to a new level of cooperation. But Putin wants the system to be based almost entirely in the former Soviet Union, while Bush still plans to install facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland. Bush said that he supported Putin's general approach and agreed to talk further. But the two sides did not seem much closer to resolving their differences.
- The G-8 countries reached a compromise agreement on climate change at their June summit meeting in Heiligendamm, Germany, in which Bush achieved most of his objectives. In exchange for Bush's agreement to a global goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the European countries stopped insisting on mandatory targets and accepted U.S. demands for all the world's major countries to be included in any new arrangements, for technology to be a major part of the solution, and for nothing to be done to harm strong economic growth.
- French president Nicolas Sarkozy followed up his decisive victory in May's presidential race by gaining a significant mandate in France's June parliamentary elections, with his party and its allies winning 346 seats against 231 for leftist parties. But the victory was not the landslide many had predicted, partly because of a mishandled announcement of possible tax increases.

- Shortly after his election victories, Sarkozy in late June blocked the opening of discussions with Turkey on economic and monetary policy, a key element of Ankara's entry negotiations with the European Union. Sarkozy made opposition to Turkish EU membership a central plank in his presidential campaign. His move cast serious new doubts over the negotiations as Turkey prepared for elections in July.
- The so-called Quartet, composed of the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia, named former British prime minister Tony Blair as a special envoy in their efforts to negotiate an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.
- The United States and the United Kingdom signed a treaty facilitating technology transfers and easing export controls on defense and arms technologies, resolving many aspects of a long-running dispute.

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